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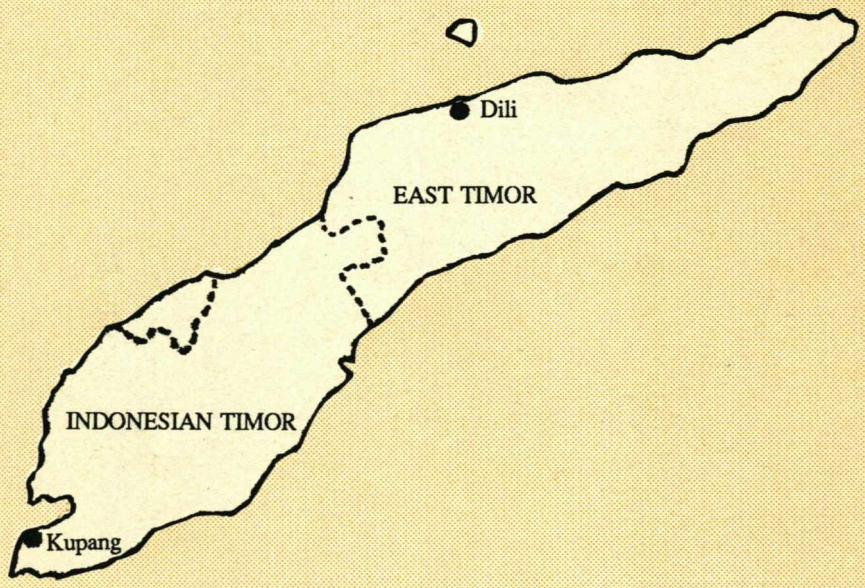
# THE UNITING CHURCH AND EAST TIMOR




**The Uniting Church in Australia**
**Social Responsibility and Justice Committee**

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# Preface

It is almost twelve years since Indonesian armed forces invaded East Timor. That military action ended an attempt by East Timorese people to establish an independent state following the decision of the Portugese Government to end their 450 years of colonial rule.

The Australian and United States Governments supported the intervention of Indonesia in the territory. When offered the opportunity by Indonesia and Portugal, Australia refused to be part of an international task force to oversee the establishment of democracy in the territory.

Today after nearly twelve years and the deaths from war, hunger and disease of perhaps 200,000 people in East Timor, the war drags on. The suffering for the people of the territory has been dreadful.

Australians in general and many members of the Uniting Church in particular, have repeatedly asked for information and analysis of the situation.

This paper has been prepared for the Assembly's Commission for Mission, by the Social Responsibility and Justice Committee in consultation with the World Mission Committee. It is meant to serve three purposes.

First, it is a discussion document meant to provide members of the Uniting Church in Australia with as accurate and up-to-date information of the situation in East Timor as we can obtain and to provide them with some analysis of the facts as we see them. It provides a basis for understanding and action.

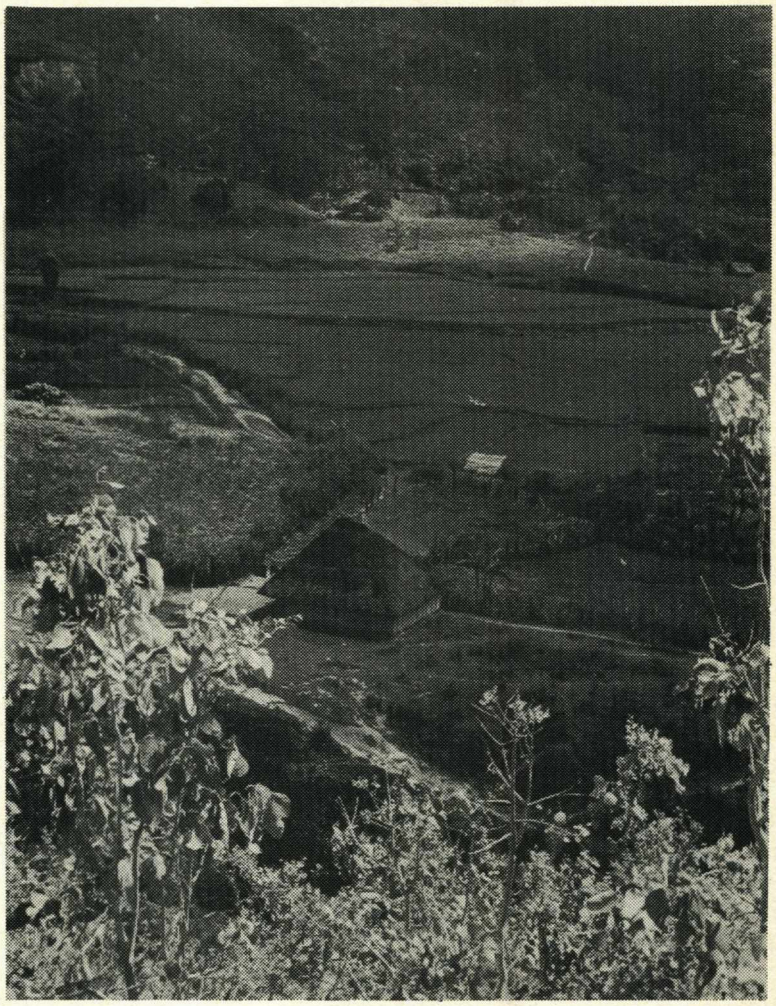
Second, the paper provides a viewpoint of the Commission for Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia, offered to partner churches in Indonesia for their consideration and encouragement. The Commission does not consider that any satisfactory solution can be arrived at in East Timor through military means. The Government of Indonesia must seek a negotiated settlement, rather than one imposed from the top, and take the initiative in bringing the suffering to an end.

Third, the paper provides the Commission itself with compelling reasons for expressing our solidarity with the churches in East Timor as they encourage their people in their attempts to reach a just solution to the situation as a basis for peace, security and hope.

John P. Brown
DIRECTOR OF MISSION
THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
20th April, 1987

# Introduction

East Timor, the eastern half of the Timor island, is a small territory (14,925 sq.km) only 900 kilometres from Darwin. Population figures vary. The Indonesian Government census of 1980 put the population at 550,000 which is, it should be noted, some 100-130,000 fewer than the last estimate provided by Portugal in 1974. It is a poor land with a per capita income of US$714 (only 15.4% of the land is cultivated), 0.3 doctors per 10,000 people, and only 30% of the people literate. Christians (mainly Catholics) make up 60% of the population, a remarkable increase from the estimated 40% in 1975. This growth is generally attributed to the protection and support the church has shown to the people of East Timor. The people maintain a strong and rich cultural tradition, developed over centuries and preserved in the face of colonisation.



East Timor

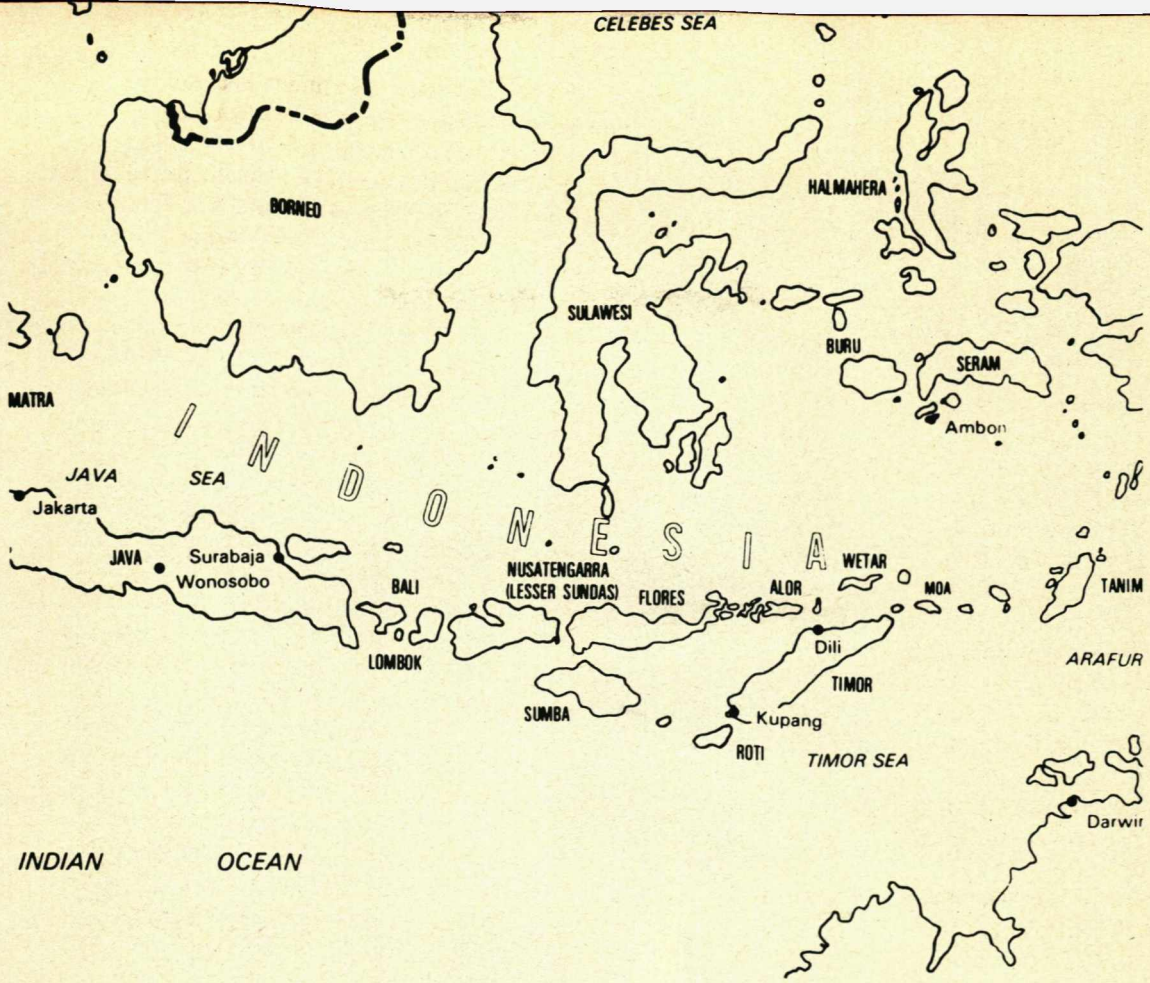
The Portuguese arrived in Timor in 1520, although the Dutch took over the Western part of the Island after capturing Kupang in 1651. Indonesia took over West Timor from the Dutch at independence in 1949.

Although it did not have an extensive colonial administration, Portugal exercised a degree of economic, military and political control over the Territory. Not until 1910, however, did Portugal succeed in pacifying the whole of East Timor. The worst features of the Salazar dictatorship were reflected in East Timor, including the fact that it was used as a place of exile for the most vocal opponents of the regime.

After WWII East Timor became one of Portugal's overseas territories, with all East Timorese being granted Portuguese citizenship.

Even though the area became an "autonomous region of the Portuguese Republic" in 1972, there was no freedom of expression and no political life. The small amount of development which occurred in the decade prior to 1974 was due to international pressure (including that applied by Australia through the UN).

The revolution in Portugal in April 1974 led to a major change in policy in relation to its colonies, including that of East Timor. There




were two aspects to this change of policy: (i) the decision to divest Portugal of overseas territories, and (ii) the decision to begin the process of self-determination and allow political activity.

As a result of this latter change an attempt was made to establish a government council in which three approved parties would participate. These were Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor (FRETILIN), and Democratic People's Association of Timor (APODETI). The Council failed because APODETI, the smallest of the groups, wanted negotiations with Indonesia. Although UDT later moved in this direction, in 1974 prior to any hint of an Indonesian invasion both FRETILIN and UDT publicly indicated a pro-independence and anti-Indonesian stance.

In August 1975 UDT attempted a coup to force FRETILIN to expel its left wing. (UDT had been told by Indonesian intelligence that Indonesia would intervene if FRETILIN gained power). Civil war broke out, but when the majority of Timorese members of the Portuguese army joined FRETILIN they were assured of victory. That occurred on 24 September, and FRETILIN immediately began a programme of rehabilitation and reconstruction. [Pro Mundi Vita pp. 6-8]

Much of what would occur from that point on was the result of fears about FRETILIN, and claim by Indonesia that it was a Communist group. Yet the analysis in Pro Mundi Vita would seem to be more accurate:

> FRETILIN represents a coming-together of two tendencies: on the one hand, progressive Christian influences and, on the other hand, Marxist influences inspired by the revolutionary nationalism of Amilcar Cabral, founder of the State of Guinea Bissau which became independent in 1974. [p.7]

FRETILIN was a front with more and less radical elements, but its leadership was not Marxist. Rather, it was staunchly nationalist.

Herding goats in happier pre-invasion times. Some 200,000 Timorese have died as a result of the Indonesian invasion.

# Indonesian invasion

On December 7th 1975, Indonesia invaded the territory of East Timor. Only nine days before, the FRETILIN administration had proclaimed an independent Democratic Republic of East Timor and appealed for international recognition and support.

All the evidence points to the invasion occuring because the Indonesian Government believed that it could not live with what it saw to be a communist government on its door step. An independent state would have undermined its authority in the region and given some hope to other separatist movements within Indonesia. Certainly serious concerns had to arise for Indonesia to break its repeated assertion that it had no intention of annexing East Timor.

Indications are that both the US and Australia concurred in the take-over, although for different reasons.

In 1974, the then Prime Minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam, declared that an independent East Timor would be "an unviable state and a potential threat to the area". The Prime Minister saw little role for mini-states in the modern world and believed that the poor economy and lack of a leadership elite would make East Timor a destabilising influence in the region.

The US considers the whole of Indonesia to be of great strategic importance. Evidence suggests that the US was fully aware of Indonesian intentions and that they agreed to the plans. Certainly Kissinger's analysis of the situation never mentioned the fate of the people or their right to self-determination and freedom from aggression. [National Times, June 6 to 12, 1982 p.15] After the invasion US military aid to Indonesia was increased.

Various parts of the Indonesian community have offered other reasons for the invasion. For example, the Indonesian Council of Churches said in a 1982 Report that Indonesia was concerned that a prolonged civil war would lead to wide-spread suffering and the possible intervention by foreign powers. It said that Indonesia intervened to speed up the process of self-determination, and set up

> a provisional government to implement, as far as possible in the given circumstances, the people of East Timor's right to self-determination. [DGI, "Oost-Timor:een rapport van de kerken van Indonesie", Informatiendient NMR ('s Hertogenbosch), 12 November 1982 pp.9-10]

That the country's leaders were concerned about the possibility of regional instability resulting from events in East Timor is indicated by the request for a multi-national task force (a request made by both Portugal and Indonesia, a request the Australian Government refused).

The great disappointment is that Indonesia has not permitted an act of self-determination that is recognisable as such under accepted democratic practices.

Indeed, the invasion was carried out with unusual brutality and the Indonesians have yet to 'win over' the local population, having underestimated FRETILIN's strength and support.

# Since the invasion

Since December 1975 the FRETILIN forces have carried on a campaign against the Indonesian occupation. This has been both a diplomatic and military campaign, which has been given heart by United Nations, Portugese and Vatican refusal to recognise Indonesian sovereignty. The UN still considers Portugal to be the administrative authority of the territory under international law.

East Timor has been dropped from the Human Rights Commission but remains on the listing of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation. For the first few years after 1975 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognising "the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, freedom and independence", and urging the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor. However, support for resolutions which oppose Indonesia's continued occupation of East Timor has gradually been eroded.

In 1982, the UN General Assembly Resolution 37/30 asked the Secretary-General "to initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned, with a view to exploring avenues and achieving a comprehensive settlement of the problem". Negotiations have proceeded under UN auspices between Portugal and Indonesia, concentrating on humanitarian issues - freedom of religion, protection of Timorese culture and the repatriation of former Portuguese civil servants. The UN Secretary-General in his 1985 progress report expressed the hope that negotiations could move to political issues to reach a comprehensive settlement of the problem.

Regrettably, however, there has been no real progress on the political level, though Portugal and Indonesia have continued to meet. Neither has there been any attempt to include the FRETILIN resistence or other acceptable Timorese representatives in the negotiation process, despite their declared openness to UN resolution 37/30 and obvious role as "a directly concerned party". It is anticipated that Mr. Perez de Cueller will table his final report on the question during 1987 and that he will record his failure to achieve the substance of the task he was given in 1982. It is difficult to what further action the UN will take.

One possibility is that the UN might request the International Court of Justice in the Hague to adjudicate on whether the East Timorese people

Timorese children at Manaluto, 1982. According to the Governor of East Timor the war has left 20,000 orphans and 11,000 abandoned children in East Timor.

have exercised their UN recognised right to self-determination. This would at least serve to keep the issue on the international agenda, an important pre-requisite for a proper settlement.

During the same period in which the UN Secretary-General has been attempting to achieve a just settlement, Indonesia has launched several offensives with the purpose of wiping out Fretilin. The largest in recent times began in August, 1983, when a six-month long cease-fire broke down, and lasted until February, 1985. These operations have failed to crush the resistence, despite involving many thousands of Indonesian troops. Reports from various sources indicate that the people of East Timor are now stronger and better organised than ever and well prepared for protracted guerilla war under the leadership of Xanana Gusmao. The map at Appendix B shows the position in 1986 (FALINTIL is the military wing of FRETILIN)

Most estimates suggest that around 200,000 people (30% of the population) have died as a direct or indirect result of the war. During 1978-79 there was a severe famine which caused many thousands to die. The famine was made worse by the very great damage to agriculture during the early years of the conflict. Hunger forced the people to come down from the mountains where most of the population had retreated to, and now substantial numbers are concentrated into "resettlement villages" - (some 150,000 to 300,000 people).

Amnesty International (June 1985) has made claims of human rights violations: torture, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances of non-combatants. Up until now, Amnesty and other international non- Government Organisations have been denied access to FRETILIN prisoners and trials.

Access to East Timor by humanitarian organisations - in particular the International Committee of Red Cross - has been irregular and has been restricted so that many parts of the territory have not been visited. This is despite numerous resolutions passed by bodies of the UN, and approaches by other organisations to the Indonesian Government. In response to international criticism about lack of access, a number of "guided tours" have been arranged for politicians, journalists and diplomats. But no "tours" have been allowed to meet and speak with leaders of the resistance.

# Support

One direct contact the East Timorese people have for voicing their struggle is the radio link re-established between East Timor and Northern Australia in 1985. . It is a thin, frail link - one that is an embarrassment to the Indonesian and Australian Governments. According to a report of the Revolutionary Council for National Resistence, broadcast in September, 1985, FRETILIN retains control over large areas, particularly along the Southern and Eastern parts of the Territory. It also reported that Indonesian control does not extend beyond 2 to 8 kms around each village or "resettlement camp" throughout the country. (See appended map. This map is based on a stolen Indonesian military map and two FRETILIN maps.)

The other voice of support for the people of East Timor comes from the Catholic church. The people have turned to that church for protection, support and direction, and a mutual trust has grown up between the people and the church. Believing that there is no easy way out of the oppression which has come upon the people, the church continues to nurture the people's faith, speak of their suffering, and provide aid to ease that suffering.

There is a great dilemma for the Catholic church (as institution): either it accepts the integration of East Timor as a fait accompli or it supports the ongoing liberation struggle led by FRETILIN. If integration or annexation is accepted the church alienates itself from a great number of the people. Yet it is unable to support the armed struggle.

Lacking the the opportunity to gain change through protest in East Timor, and unable to help the people win freedom from Indonesia, the church serves the people in the area of human development. While committed to the need for self-determination and opposed to the forced integration of East Timor into Indonesia, Church leaders have been more outspoken on issues of human rights.

At the same time the Catholic church has been careful that it does not support the Indonesian government against the people of East Timor.

Since the retirement of the Bishop of East Timor in 1977, the Church in East Timor has been headed by an Apostolic Administrator. In this way the Vatican avoids either infuriating the Indonesian Government by appointing a bishop who is not part of Indonesia, or giving de facto recognition of Indonesian rule by making the bishop a part of the Indonesian Bishop's Conference.

In the face of evidence that surrendered guerillas were executed (contrary to Indonesian promises) the Catholic church has refused to call upon FRETILIN to lay down its arms. For this the Church suffered some resentment and harassment from the Indonesian armed forces. [Statement of Mgr. da Costa Lopes to the American Bishops' Committee for Social Development and World Peace, Washington, 12 June 1984.]

Traditional Tmorese house. Timorese people are linguistically and culturally distinctive.

# The situation in summary

1. The present situation in East Timor is marked by gross violations of the rights of the people of that place. There are at least four areas in which the rights of the East Timorese people are being denied:

(i) reports from many significant sources indicate that people have been killed and tortured in very large numbers.

(ii) freedom of speech and assembly are heavily curtailed, press censorship is part of daily life and the right to organise is very restricted.

(iii) Culturally, ethnically and religiously, the East Timorese are looked down upon as a "backward people" and treated in a manner that is perceived as racist. The actions of the Indonesian Government suggest that the intention is to destroy the East Timorese people spiritually and culturally. The de-Timorisation of East Timor is institutionalised - e.g. through schooling and the use of Indonesian as the official language. The re-shaping of Timor socially and economically has a real impact on the people. Timorese women are forced into family planning programmes. Widows and girls are forced into prostitution and servitude to save their lives. [Support for these claims of spiritual and cultural destruction is to be found in the "Statement of the Apostolic Administrator and Presbyterial Council of the Dili Diocese", January 1, 1985.]

The values and beliefs of the people, which they cherish and which gives them their

identity, are deliberately violated by the occupying power. Indonesian military presence is a constant source of insecurity. The Indonesian presence does not protect the people, rather it instills fear and subservience.

Now the East Timorese fear they will become a minority in their own land. Under Indonesia's transmigration programme, East Timor has been designated an underpopulated region and a small number of people have already been settled there. There are plans to settle a larger number of transmigrants in East Timor by the year 2000. Indications are that many of these new settlers will be Balinese Christians (thus increasing the Protestant population of Catholic East Timor). The Timorese are being increasingly marginalised in the bureaucracy and the economy, as military personnel and Javanese steadily occupy the senior positions and sectors.

(iv) The government of Indonesia claims that the people have already exercised their right to self-determination. Yet the fact that fighting still continues would indicate that no such act has occurred. When asked in an interview in August 1985 to comment on the huge sums Jakarta is pumping into East Timor, Mgr. Belo (the Apostolic Administrator of Deli) replied, "The only problem in Timor is the problem of the freedom of the inhabitants".

It needs to be understood that the context for these denials of human rights is the steady 'militarisation' of all levels of the Indonesian government and economy, and the maintenance of power by the exercise of force. The activity of Indonesia in East Timor is the activity of the military acting only within the restraints imposed by a military 'dictatorship'.

2. The issue of human rights is not easily separable from the issue of self-determination, even though it would be much easier to concentrate on the obvious human rights violations. The reason for this is that a significant number ofthe people of East Timor appear to be committed to a continuing struggle for independence. At the same time, it is difficult to recommend to FRETILIN that they should lay down their arms and negotiate without some very strong guarantees that surrendering soldiers will not be killed (which has happened in the past).

3. It is highly unlikely that the Indonesian Government will, of its own accord, allow a semi- independent government to exist in East Timor. The concerns which gave rise to the 1975 invasion still exist. At the same time there is pressure from the military which would seem to be unlikely to accept withdrawal from the situation, seeing such withdrawal as defeat. There is also pressure on Jakarta to continue the transmigration programme and ease population pressures on Java and other parts of Indonesia. East Timor is a target for such transmigration.

4. In public statements the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (formerly DGI, now PGI) has consistently placed itself with the Indonesian Government in its invasion of East Timor. While it has quite rightly and publically criticised Portugal for failing to prepare East Timor for decolonization, and has claimed that Portugal has abdicated all historical and moral right to authority in East Timor, yet it has supported the Indonesian invasion. [DGI, "Oost-Timor: een rapport van de kerken van Indonesie", Informatiedienst NMR ('s Hertogenbosch), 12 November 1982, pp.9-10. Many of Indonesia's current critics would concur with this assessment of Portugal's role, while being opposed to the Indonesian invasion.]

The PGI (then DGI) made the first, official non-Government visit to East Timor in 1977 to visit the 4,000 Protestants there. Since 1980 it has run an ecumenical aid programme, and as part of that made a second visit in 1982. It has been actively involved in sponsoring and supporting Protestant Clergy in East Timor.

A number of security officers and government officials are active in the Protestant community in Dili, creating a close link between the government and the church and helping to explain the church's stand on East Timor. There is also the factor of being a minority community in a country in which Islam is the major religion.

One of the reasons why Christians have a relatively important place in Indonesian leadership is that they were very actively involved in the Indonesian struggle for independence. There is within the Indonesian Christian community a tradition of commitment to freedom and human rights. One would have hoped that this tradition would have been more fully drawn on in this situation.

# Some theological concerns

The church is always involved in a struggle to understand its Christian identity within the wider national identity and life. The struggle is always to maintain that identity without either being co-opted or domesticated, or being seen as disloyal to the goals of the wider society.

This struggle for identity is sharpest in those countries where the gospel seems most at odds with the values of society. The history of Protestant Christianity as a part of the capitalist West means that Protestant Christians in Communist countries have frequently articulated their identity over against that of the society, seeing themselves as a subversive minority upholding belief in the one true God.

In countries like Australia the gospel has been largely enculturated, so that the church has almost lost its identity as a distinctive community. It co-operates with the economic and political values of the society, in particular, not in a conscious way but because it has established itself as part of society and its values.

As a religious minority in a militarised country, the Indonesian Churches must struggle with how they maintain their identity, an identity which is tied to the liberating and saving acts of Jesus Christ. In the present situation of the denial of human rights in East Timor and other places in Indonesia, the Church is provided with a very sharp reminder of its vocation.

There is a constant struggle in the Bible to remind people that God cannot be domesticated and used to support or give divine blessing to the present situation. God is always free, will not reveal God's name (Exodus 3:14), prefers to live in a tent rather than a house (i.e. is a journeying God, not one who is at the disposal of a temple hierarchy - 2 Samuel 7), and is always able to do the unexpected, call forth a new community, raise up a prophetic voice, and care for the oppressed. God is the One who chose the very unexpected way of the cross.

Jesus reminded the faith community that there are limits to the power of the State (Luke 20:19-26). A State which claims absolute power, and tries to justify all unjustness on the basis of its power, is reminded that God alone is Lord and total obedience is owed only to God.

Where our churches draw the line between obedience to God and obedience to the State, and when it becomes necessary to tell the Government that it encroaches on the realm of God, is something with which we must all struggle. Certainly in Australia we have not always done this very well, alternating between belligerence and silence. Part of the ecumenical dialogue is the ability to call each other to account for the way we do this, yet without the arrogance that suggests that an outsider can tell another how their church must be the church.

Yet, one of the issues which is highlighted in our attempt to relate to the issues in East Timor, is the question of who is the church to which we relate ecumenically. Is it simply the official (Protestant) council of churches? What becomes of the wider relationship with the Catholic church, particularly as it is that church which most closely identifies with the people of East Timor? What happens when the position of these two bodies is apparently in conflict?

There is also the issue of de facto recognition of East Timor's annexation by Indonesia. The Uniting Church in Australia faces the same dilemma as the Catholic church: how to arrange our life and relationships so as not to destroy our relationships with Indonesia (both Church and State), yet neither to alienate ourselves from the people who struggle in East Timor. Ecumenically this is very difficult, for it raise questions of our recognition of the PGI's ability to speak on issues of East Timor.

# The Uniting Church and East Timor

The Christian church is committed by its gospel to work for an end to the abuse of human rights and to assist people in their struggle to gain control of their own lives. There is a need to act with courage and vigour if we believe that respect for humanity and a reduction of the terrors of militarism are fundamental to all peoples.

The question is: how can the churches in Australia, the region and globally best act to bring about change?

It is very tempting for us in the West to assume that the best way to bring about change is to create a lot of noise in public in order to build up support for our position. Such a position is based on the premise of a relatively free and democratic society in which there is religious tolerance (and in which Christianity is the majority religion).

Whether or not this is the best way to bring about change is an issue for strategy. It is sometimes a viable way to act when practiced within this country and does not place any burdens on those we wish to assist. The same may not always be true in other countries. Thus, in dealing with issues in countries in Eastern Europe and the USSR the churches have adopted the position of making no statements or applying no pressure unless requested to do so by the church in that country.

The Churches in Australia (including the UCA, through the ACC) have adopted this approach in relation to East Timor, relying on advice from the PGI.

Yet, if the Australian Church's position is that it will act in response to the people of an area, then questions must be raised about the adequacy of this approach. It may be time that the UCA turned for advice to that church which is most closely aligned with the people of East Timor, viz: the Catholic Church.

Since 1983 the Catholic Church has spoken out strongly on the abuses of human rights in East Timor and the issue of the people's struggle for self-determination. Various National Catholic Bishop's Conferences (e.g. Indonesia, Portugal, the Netherlands and Japan) have expressed their solidarity and concern for the Church and people of East Timor. At last the international community has responded to the cry of the religious of East Timor:

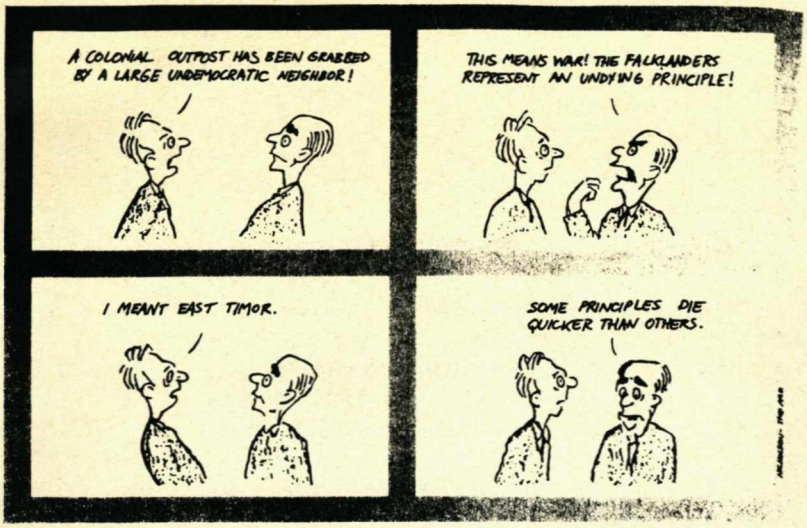
> "We felt stunned by this silence which seemed to allow us to die deserted". [Pro Mundi Vita p.3]

The Uniting Church should heed this call from the wider ecumenical community, and call upon the Australian Government to use its influence with Indonesia to end the abuse of human rights in East Timor, allow free access to the Red Cross and other aid agencies, and open the country to journalists and Government representatives who can report on the situation in East Timor.

At the same time the UCA should express its solidarity with the people and Churches of East Timor as they struggle for peace and justice and should pray for the people in their suffering.

The abuse of human rights in East Timor will continue while ever the government of Indonesia refuses to recognise the need of the people to have a more adequate say in their future. The situation in East Timor will not be solved militarily. Only a political solution will achieve a long-term settlement of the areas problems.

The Australian Government should encourage the Indonesian Government to enter into the negotiations instigated by the UN, and to include the FRETILIN in those negotiations. The outcome of discussions will depend on the parties concerned, and it is not helpful for outsiders to pre-empt those discussions with a set solution. However, it is important to recognise that the solution does not rest simply with Portugal and Indonesia, nor would it be solved simply by another vote by the people of East Timor. FRETILIN and other factions must be involved at all stages of the negotiations.


A COLONIAL OUTPOST HAS BEEN GRABBED BY A LARGE UNDEMOCRATIC NEIGHBOR!
THIS MEANS WAR! THE FALKLANDERS REPRESENT AN UNDYING PRINCIPLE!
I MEANT EAST TIMOR.
SOME PRINCIPLES DIE QUICKER THAN OTHERS.

The Prime Minister of Australia (Mr. Hawke) has said that while it is regrettable that there was not an act of self- determination,

> "that was in the past... we must now look to the future".
> [Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia 1984 Yearbook, p.123]

Yet while this may provide an excuse for the Australian Government to recognise the annexation, it is both false and based on a dreadful denial of Australia's commitment to the UN.

It is false because the past cannot simply be left behind in that way. The events of the past still live on in the struggle of the people of East Timor and, has been stated already, there will be no new future until Indonesia allows the people a voice in their future.

The UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Territories and Peoples (Adopted December 1960) asserts that

> any attempt, aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country, is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The actions of Indonesia are clearly in breach of this Declaration. At the same time it has consistently ignored requests from the UN General Assembly and Security Council for it to withdraw its troops from East Timor.

The attitude of both the Australian and Indonesian Governments seems to be that the UN should simply be ignored until, as is happening, the issue fades from memory and the motion is finally defeated. So much for Australia's commitment to the UN.

While ever Indonesia refuses to enter into negotiations with FRETILIN and other factions regarding East Timor's future, and while ever human rights violations continue, the UN and Nonaligned Movement should be encouraged to leave the item on their agenda. The Australian Government should be encouraged to change the vote it has made since 1978 and vote in favour of the UN resolution, and particularly that part which recognises the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination.

# APPENDIX A

## Chronology of Political Events

| | |
|---|---|
| C.1520 | The Portugese establish a settlement in East Timor. |
| 1912 | Uprising of Timorest against Portugese control bloodily crushed. |
| 1941- 43 | Australian troops with Timorese support fight the Japanese. 40 Australians and 40,000 Timorese die. |
| 1949 | Indonesia (including West Timor) wins independence from the Dutch. |
| April 1974 | Military coup in Lisbon: Armed Forces' Movement overthrows fascist Caetano regime. Decolonisation process commences. Establishment of political parties: ASDT (later FRETILIN, pro-independence after a short transition), UDT (pro-Portugal, advocates eventual transition to independence), APODETI (pro-integration with Indonesia). FRETILIN rapidly becomes the most popular and best organised of the three. |
| September 1974 | Whitlam tells Suharto than an independent East Timor is unviable and a threat to regional security. |
| January 1975 | UDT and FRETILIN form a pro-independence coalition. FRETILIN develops literacy, health and agricultural self-sufficiency programmes in the villages. |
| August 1975 | UDT coup and civil war resulting insome 3,000 deaths, displacement of refugees to Australia and West Timor. FRETILIN victory. |
| 28 November 1975 | FRETILIN declares independence and proclaims the Democratic Republic of East Timor. |
| 6 December 1975 | Ford and Kissinger complete visit to Jakarta. |
| 7 December 1975 | Full-scale Indonesian invasion launched. |
| 12 December 1975 | UN General Assembly calls on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor. Australia supports the resolution. US abstains. |
| January 1976 | UN Special Representative, Winspeare Guicciardi, is frustrated in his attempt to visit FRETILIN-controlled areas in East Timor. |
| April 1976 | Australia presses for Red Cross (ICRC) to be re-admitted to Timor. |
| May-July 1976 | Indonesian-conducted process of integration of East Timor as 27th province of Indonesia is rejected by both Australia and US. |
| October 1976 | Australian authorities seize Darwin radio link to avoid "embarrassing Indonesia". |
| 19 November 1976 | Reports mention that widespread fighting continues in East Timor, that FRETILIN controls 85% of the territory, that 60,000 people have died. |
| January 1978 | Australia extends de facto recognition to Indonesia's takeover of East Timor. |
| September 1978 | Foreign ambassadors, shocked by visit to East Timor, call for urgent humanitarian aid. |
| 3 December 1978 | FRETILIN radio link with outside world ceases. |
| October 1979 | ICRC says humanitarian situation in East Timor "as bad as Biafra". ICRC and CRS commence 6-month emergency programme. |
| June 1980 | Uprising in Dili coinciding with FRETILIN attacks. |
| July-September 1981 | Massive Indonesian offensive using 30,000 civilians as a "fence of legs" to drive guerillas from the mountains. Many Timorese die but few members of FRETILIN captured. |

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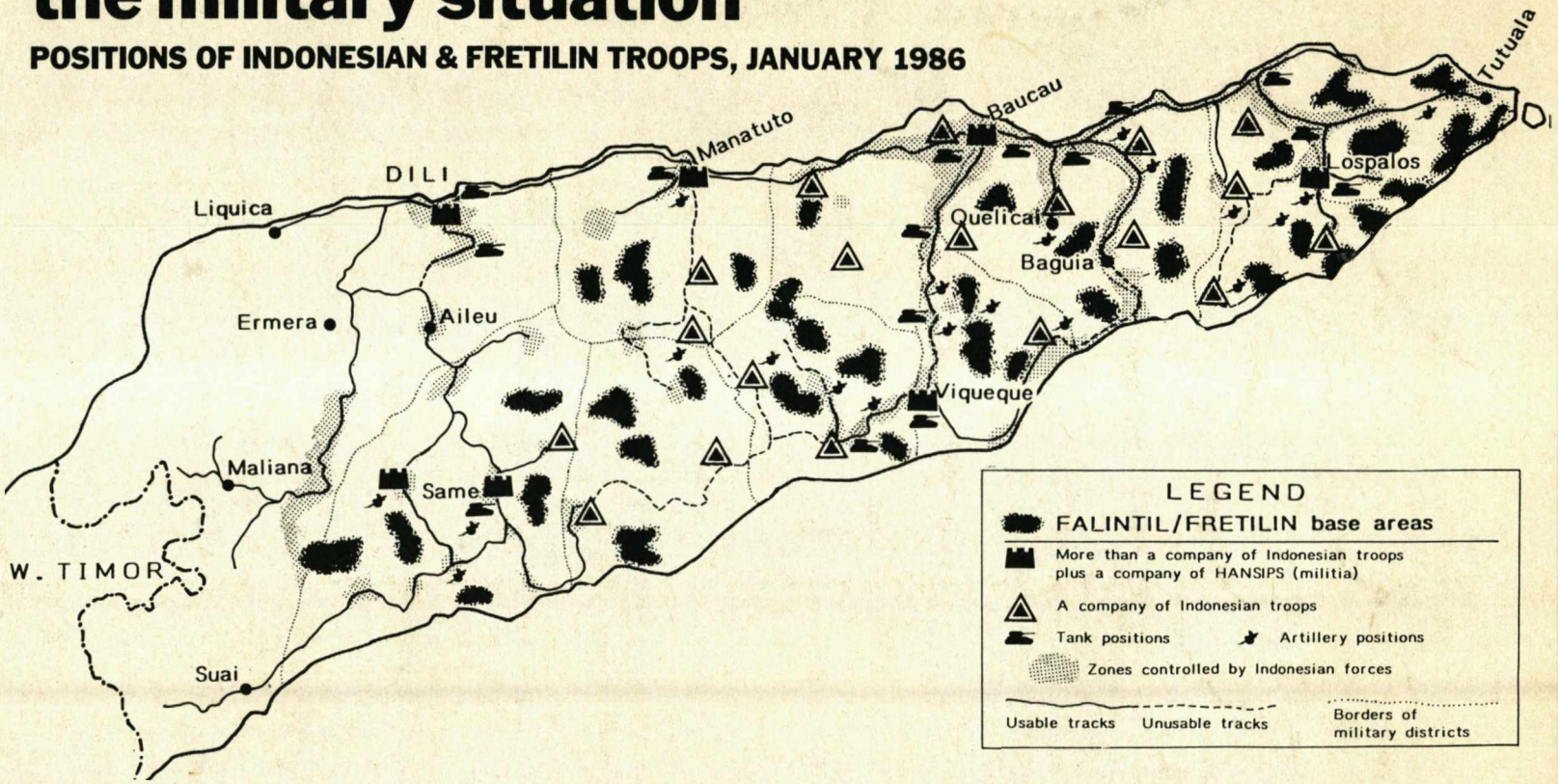
| November 1981 | Australian Senate votes to conduct inquiry into conditions in East Timor. |
| January 1982 | Apostolic Administrator da Costa Lopes predicts possible famine. |
| Nov 82- Jan 83 | Counter-offensive by restructured FRETILIN. |
| March 1983 | Cease-fire negotiated; photographs, tape recording and captured documents smuggled to Portgual. General Benny Murdani becomes new chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces. |
| June 1983 | Mgr. da Costa Lopes removed by Vatican under Indonesian pressure. Mgr. Belo succeeds as Apostolic Administrator. |
| August 1983 | New military offensive launched against FRETILIN. |
| 17 November 1983 | Indonesian Catholic Bishop's Conference send a letter of solidarity to Mgr Belo and the Catholic Church in East Timor. |
| March 1984 | Portuguese Bishop's statement expresses anxiety about the tragedy in East Timor. |
| July 1984 | The Pope voices his concern with "preoccupation" over the situation in East Timor. |
| 1 January 1985 | A Statement from the Catholic Church in East Timor indicating how it sees the situation and where it stands. |
| 26 May 1985 | For the first time in 6 years radio link from Darwin is resumed with FRETILIN in Timor. |
| June 1985 | Amnesty International released 87 page report on human rights abuses in East Timor. |
| July 1985 | The CCA Conference in Soel was presented with a Declaration on East Timor endorsed by 427 Parliamentarians from 13 countries and 109 church organisations from Asia, the Pacific and Australia. |
| August 1985 | Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke recognises Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. |
| September 1985 | Negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia under UN auspices, move onto the political level for the first time. |
| 7 December 1985 | The tenth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. |
| March 1986 | FRETILIN-UDT announce the establishment of a new coalition working together to pursue independence. |
| 11-12 June 1986 | CCJP (Holland) organised meeting of European Churches and Christians (UK, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands) on East Timor. |
| June 1986 | A bi-partisan group of 133 US Congressional Representatives sponsored a resolution of concern on East Timor in the Congress. |
| 15 August 1986 | UN Special Committee on Decolonisation hearings in New York. A record number of NGOs (from Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia) presented submissions. |

# EAST TIMOR:
# the military situation

## POSITIONS OF INDONESIAN & FRETILIN TROOPS, JANUARY 1986




**Sources:**

*Disposition of Indonesian forces: information from Fretilin, January 1986, smuggled out of East Timor.*

*Disposition of Fretilin forces: information from Indonesian intelligence report captured by Fretilin mid 1985. (Fretilin has confirmed its broad accuracy).*

***Tapol**, May 1986*

APPENDIX B

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